



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

SHIRIN FOROOTAN

Celebrating 125 Years of the Orange County Bar Association

This year marks a truly special milestone for our Orange County Bar Association—our 125th birthday. For more than a century, our Bar has been the backbone of our local legal community, connecting attorneys, judges, and legal professionals in service, education, and fellowship. As we celebrate this remarkable anniversary, every issue of *Orange County Lawyer* in 2026 will be a commemorative edition, dedicated to honoring our history, celebrating our collective accomplishments, and looking forward to the decades ahead.

Each issue will highlight the defining moments of our past, reflect on the challenges we've overcome, and showcase how far we've come as a legal community. From our earliest beginnings to our current era of innovation and inclusion, this year's publication series will be a living chronicle of the people and progress that have shaped our Bar into what it is today. Together, we will celebrate 125 years of excellence, growth, and service—and the best part is that our story is still being written.

Honoring Immediate Past President Mei Tsang

As we turn the page to a new year, it's important to first express heartfelt gratitude to the immediate Past President, Mei Tsang, for her outstanding leadership and vision. Mei accomplished everything she set out to do—and then some. Among her many achievements, she helped establish the OCBA's first-ever AI Committee, ensuring that our organization continues to evolve alongside technology and remains at the forefront of legal innovation.

She also spearheaded OCBA's first Community Fair, which brought together lawyers, judges, students, and members of the public for a day of connection, entertainment, and great food. The event reflected her deep belief in bridging the gap between the legal profession and the community we serve.

On behalf of the entire membership, I extend sincere thanks to Mei for her tireless commitment, creativity, and compassion. Her leadership strengthened our foundation, and her friendship and mentorship continue to inspire so many of us.

Reflecting on Our Shared Accomplishments

Last year, as President-Elect, I collaborated with our Board and we were able to achieve the following together:

First, we updated the OCBA Bylaws, which are in effect this year. This update was a long time coming, and it reflects our commitment to inclusivity, modernization, and long-term growth. The two biggest changes include:

- Extending Young Lawyers Division membership eligibility from five years to ten. This allows more early-career attorneys to benefit from mentorship, networking, and leadership opportunities during the crucial first decade of practice.
- Expanding opportunities for partnerships with affiliate bar

associations to enhance collaboration and ensure our Bar continues to reflect the diversity and vibrancy of Orange County's legal community.

We also implemented an OCBA Standards of Conduct Policy—a values statement that reflects who we are as an organization. This policy is more than a set of rules; it's a shared responsibilities proclamation, a reaffirmation of our collective commitment to civility, integrity, and respect for one another and for the profession we serve. It articulates what we all know to be true: our reputation as lawyers depends not only on our skill, but on how we treat our colleagues, clients, and community.

Finally, we began the groundwork for updating OCBA's Strategic Plan by conducting a survey of Bar leaders, focusing on key areas such as:

- Delivering value to our members
- Enhancing community relations
- Supporting access to justice
- Promoting excellence in the legal profession, and
- Maintaining strong Bar leadership and infrastructure

The plan will guide our organization for the next five years. We wanted to make sure our plan reflected the needs and priorities of our members. The survey results gave us an honest snapshot of who we are and where we can grow. The final plan will help us continue to build on our strengths while addressing opportunities for innovation and engagement in the years ahead.

Looking Ahead: A Year of Celebration and Connection

As we embark on this 125th anniversary year, I want to acknowledge that being your OCBA President is both an honor and a responsibility that I take deeply to heart. I know there will be challenges, both expected and unforeseen, but I'm optimistic and ready. Together with our talented Board, dedicated staff, and passionate volunteers, I'm confident we will navigate whatever comes our way with professionalism, integrity, and purpose.

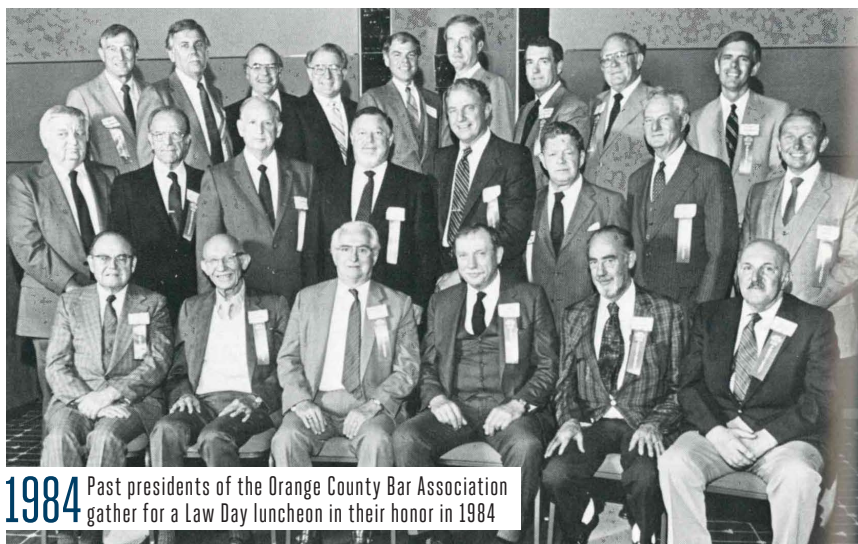
My goal this year is to celebrate our past while investing in our future. That means strengthening relationships across our sections, committees, and affiliate bars; deepening our partnerships with the judiciary and law schools; and continuing to make the OCBA a welcoming home for every lawyer in our community.

Most importantly, I want to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me—whether to share ideas, feedback, or simply to connect. Our Bar is only as strong as the people who make it up, and I look forward to getting to know even more of our members this year.

Here's to 125 years of excellence, connection, and community—and to all that lies ahead.



Shirin Forootan is President of the OCBA and founding attorney and mediator at Forootan Law and Forootan ADR. She can be reached at sforootan@ocbar.org.



1984 Past presidents of the Orange County Bar Association gather for a Law Day luncheon in their honor in 1984



1985 Orange County Women Lawyers Annual Summer Reception honoring recent admittees to the State Bar



1985 Nearly 100 members of the OCBA and guests were on hand to hear Judge Wapner and watch the OCBA Media awards ceremony.



1986 OCBA Tennis Tournament winners. (L to R) John Meyers, Lawrence Davidson, Eric Larre, Chris Kralick and Don Killian

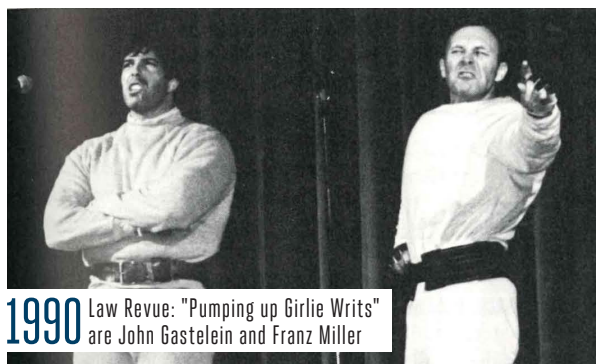
OCBA Through the Years: 1980-1990



1987 Board of Directors installed during the annual Judges Night reception



1989 Second Annual OCBA Black Tie Dinner Dance



1990 Law Revue: "Pumping up Girlie Writs" are John Gastelein and Franz Miller



1990 First female president of OCBA, Jennifer J. King